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ABSTRACT

Within the past 5 years there has been an international movement to adapt the principles and practices of Total Quality Management work environments to school-restructuring agendas. This paper reports on the development of a model called the Educational Quality System, a benchmark assessment tool for identifying the essential elements of quality work cultures. In 1994, the Florida Department of Education funded a partnership to develop an education-specific Quality system that would include benchmarks to identify progress over time as education institutions pursue Quality work cultures. The partnership was comprised of the University of South Florida, 13 school districts, and a regional network. The paper addresses the issues observed in managing change, explores the mind shifts necessary for inventing new forms of schooling, and describes the two conceptual models driving the Education Quality System. The information is based on a case study that examined the change process in 28 Florida schools. Data were obtained from interviews with the 28 principals and surveys of 1,235 teachers. The most striking pattern among the principals was that they strongly held visions of success for all students and believed in their faculty's capacity to respond to the needs of students. Two tables and two figures are included. (Contains 21 references.) (LMI)

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Managing Change to a Quality Philosophy: A Partnership Perspective

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Managing Change to a Quality Philosophy: A Partnership Perspective

In the past five years there has been an international brush fire to adapt the principles and practices of Quality work environments for the school restructuring agendas. A movement which began in the early part of this century to improve manufacturing processes and products, has emerged in the last few years not only to influence the private sector with its work and products, but also to help public, state, and national agencies around the world to their improve programs and services.

In pursuit of Quality the education enterprise, along with other governmental and social agencies, has experimented with and adapted the central tenents of "a customer satisfaction focus," "data based decision making," and "systems thinking" (Snyder, 1994a; Acker-Hocevar, 1994a). States in the USA such as New York, Minnesota and Kansas have developed education adaptations of the national Baldridge Award to assist schools in the change to a Quality way of life. Further illustrations of interest in Quality are found in USA annual state and national conventions: each year there are more sessions and more of these are based on education adaptations to Quality. Professional journals, as well, have increased the number and quality of publications about Quality in education institutions, which demonstrates further the promise that the Quality philosophy is perceived to have for transforming schools for requirements in a new century. Even the prestigious US Department of Commerce's Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria have been recently translated for educational institutions, and are being piloted in 1995.

In 1994, the Florida Department of Education funded a partnership involving the University of South Florida, 13 school districts, and a Regional Network to develop an education-specific Quality system, as well as benchmarks to identify progress over time as education institutions pursue Quality work cultures (Snyder, 1994b). This Quality system was intended to function as an umbrella for a new diagnostic and developmental support system that was in turn intended to assist schools in their restructuring activity. The state had created the need for a Quality framework through the school reform legislation known as *Blueprint 2000* (Department of Education, 1992). The intent of the partnership was to provide a developmental alternative to the state's compliance system as schools invented new ways of working.

The authors, who represented the University in the 15 member institution partnership, became responsible for developing what we now call the *Educational Quality System*. Our task was to design a benchmark system for change that reflected the essential elements found in Quality work cultures, and would address the current social challenges in education. We worked with our partner agencies in all stages of the system's design, and then submitted the new Quality system to a formal content validation using educational leaders at all levels, as well as national educational reform and Quality experts (Acker-Hocevar, 1994b). The Educational Quality System (EQS) now is ready for

piloting to determine its relative utility in helping schools to benchmark their growth over time.

As we have observed schools and districts learn about Quality systems, we observe differing philosophical assumptions that exist, and these assumptions generate qualitatively different outcomes from change efforts. These fundamental differences influence the direction for change to a Quality culture, and eventually they will affect the outcomes that result from changes to systems of work. In this paper we will: (1) address the issues we observe in managing change, (2) explore the mindshifts necessary for inventing new forms of schooling, (3) report on the two conceptual models driving the new *Education Quality System*, and (4) share the voices of 28 principals who have been managing change toward Quality work cultures in their schools. Our intention is to provide perspectives on the move toward Quality by discussing the choices that exist for educational leaders, and their implications for transforming schools.

1. Issues in Managing Change

In order that schools may respond to challenges of the late 1990s, many deep-rooted traditions of schooling face extinction, and in their place are likely to evolve dynamic and energetic work cultures. What seems to be happening, not only in the USA but throughout the world, is a virtual transformation of governments, agencies, institutions, industry and businesses, all of which are responding to rapid changes in the environment and to technological pressures (Snyder, Anderson & Johnson, 1992). At issue for social agencies are the fundamental traditions of work.

Bureaucratic systems that have evolved over the past century, and that have probably served well the needs of an age gone by, are rapidly being replaced with more fluid and responsive forms of work. Chubb and Moe (1990), policy analysts from the Brookings Institution, have observed that in the past the school organization's objective has been to deliver programs and services that were well designed by experts, and for schools to improve those over time. This bureaucratic approach to program development and school change is now recognized by many as obsolete.

Schooling traditions, however, have tenacious roots (Haberman & Dill, 1993), and revising them to any extent will require an altogether new understanding of the dynamics of change (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). To illustrate the enduring strength of habit and tradition and the challenges faced in changing bureaucracies, there has been reported a discouraging conclusion from an experiment funded by the Annie Casey Foundation. Recently, $40 million was spent on a social experiment to alter the life chances of disadvantaged youth in four cities (Welhage, Smith & Lipham, 1992). A three-year study of the project, as it evolved in the four city school systems, concluded that fundamental changes in programs, policies and structures had *not* occurred, that most interventions were only supplemental to traditional educational programs, and that few workers were prepared to use evaluation data to assess the impact of innovations. Fundamental questions are now being raised by many about the conditions for change and the leadership requirements for managing change successfully.

In another context, the Bensenville New American Schools Project, supported by $1.25 million, was dissolved after only one year of planning among the school districts and other agencies involved (Mirel, 1994). Although the initial stages of planning met most of the textbook criteria of excellence for planning change efforts, the issues of school governance, local control and school finance surfaced as major roadblocks, the big question being: "Who controls the schools?" As it turned out, the appropriated role of teachers in the new project was not anticipated well enough, and threats to teacher security prompted a negative campaign that shattered the very foundations of the project. A question looms: is real change in school cultures a possibility?

Over the past decade Quality Management has captured the interest of educators for its effects upon the success of change efforts within business and public institutions world wide. A "systems approach" to transforming organizational work cultures appears to be a key to successful change efforts to manage. A movement that has grown during the closing decades of the 20th century now centers its attention on the "customer" as the focal point for systemic change. The mushrooming Quality literatures began with successes that were reported from Japan in the use of statistical processes to improve productivity (Deming, 1986). Japan's initial success with Quality management led to further development of the concepts of Quality Control (Feigenbaum, 1983) and Systems Thinking (Juran, 1988). These developments eventually led to the American Baldrige Award that is given to high performing companies (Steeples, 1992). Many of these Quality concepts have been embraced as a construct for transforming school work cultures (Kaufman and Zahn, 1993; Snyder, 1994 a & b).

As we worked with districts at various levels of involvement over the last several years to learn and embrace Quality constructs, we observed strikingly different perspectives and consequential change agendas. We have come to understand the importance of philosophical assumptions that drive change efforts, as well as human values and their respective moral issues. Some approaches to Quality emphasize statistical tools, with the assumption that their use will help folks "clean up their act." These change efforts tend to emphasize statistical tools which become the focus for professional development. Other approaches emphasize organizational learning about Quality from readings, study groups, workshops, experiments and pilots, while addressing the challenges of certain student populations. Professional development in this second approach tends to center around the invention of better programs and services and their integration into the school's mission.

Several myths and issues have surfaced for us as we have sorted out our observations of these different adaptations to Quality. One myth is that all Quality roads lead to the same place; or, Quality adoption or adaptation projects will all produce more or less the same kinds of results. Several different philosophical orientations to Quality now exist among districts and are producing noticeably different kinds of change efforts and effects. Some educators view the business community as the primary customer, where the purpose for adopting Quality principles is to improve operations. The function

of quality within this view is to fine tune the design and delivery of programs and services to improve traditional standardized outcomes over time. In such an approach, the changing needs of student populations, along with the changing workplace requirements are not the focus for change. The Quality goal in this case has to do with efficiency of operations, and the use of statistical tools provides useful information for improvement purposes.

Within a different philosophical frame, when students are perceived as the customer, with varying population needs and new workplace requirements, the Quality goal is to develop increasing responsiveness within the organization. Systems thinking and dialogue about purpose (what are we doing?) and structure (how will we organize?) lead to the use of both qualitative and quantitative kinds of information. It seems that new questions now face educators, such as: Do we want to fine tune traditional work systems, programs and services? or, Do we want to invent new ways of responding to the changing needs of student populations as they prepare for a new century of work? These are some of the fundamental issues that face educators today, and the philosophical assumptions being made will direct change efforts and yield very different outcomes.

A related philosophical issue is how change is managed. We observe that changing to a Quality philosophy has been mandated in some places, and in others is viewed as a hope for meeting the new demands of schooling as people learn and examine Quality precepts. Philosophical issues unfold under the guise of "Who is boss?", "Who controls the resources?", "Who makes decisions?" and, "How do we work together?" Power issues surface as well, as the development of Quality systems gets played out. The top-down tradition of bosses telling subordinates what to do, might continue with employees using new tools and processes for their work. Or, the hierarchy can give way to more lateral approaches to problem solving across role groups and institutions, where different workers explore together how to improve programs and services to better meet student needs. The issues of domination vs. partnership forms of work surface, and the choices that are made will generate qualitatively different results.

Another myth is that "Change happens according to a logical comprehensive plan." So commonplace is the practice of setting goals and developing strategic plans, that, even though the change process is rocky at best, people are surprised when events do not unfold as anticipated. The literature is filled with models, steps and strategies for planning change, and yet the same literatures also report the dramas of failed change efforts based on seemingly good plans. Many seem to be unprepared to face the changing political climate within which change is planned, as well as the changing demands of communities, parents and the needs of students today. Link this constantly changing landscape of change with the rapid transformation in our own workplace, and we find ourselves learning and changing simultaneously. In the midst of seeming turmoil, it appears that the at-risk populations are expanding in quantity and in variation, while the revolution in the workplace explodes before us continuously, and we are left to wonder if at-risk students will ever be ready to participate in the work revolution ahead. Can we find a way to cope with the chaos that now exists for us as we seek to exert leadership for change?

2. Mindshifts for Managing Change

Change and continuous improvement are both possible and necessary within either traditional or emerging paradigms of schooling. If one considers creating an alternative to the traditional paradigms, however, different mental models are essential for guiding change efforts to new places. Fresh conceptualizations are offered in this section for reframing the change process within the differing philosophies of change and development that are reflected in Dominator and Partnership cultures.

In our work with schools and districts, we have observed that the work culture and change processes within institutions vary greatly. For example, some partnerships evolve into power struggles to control personal political agendas. Surprising twists like this in partnership efforts raise fundamental questions for us about the rhetoric of change and the potential that exists for transforming educational institutions at all. In deconstructing our own experiences and observations, we have come to appreciate more than ever that change is seldom linear, and rarely does it occur according to the models we create. Rather, change is vitally linked to strongholds of power and to philosophical assumptions about values and purpose.

In 1993, during an international IMTEC Conference in Berlin on schooling for the 21st century (Per Dalin, Director), we listened to, shared and dialogued with educators from Western and Eastern Europe, and in the process came to understand how relatively advanced is education in Sweden and Norway, and how dissimilar seem to be the challenges across the eastern block countries. The school system in Sochi, Russia, for example, has had a partnership with Mid-Sweden University for many years, and is addressing similar questions about interdisciplinary curriculum, school leadership, team teaching, peer coaching and nongradedness. By the end of the conference, we had developed new friendships, as well as an eagerness to work together across national boundaries.

During that conference Riane Eisler talked about Dominator and Partnership societies, a theory which has evolved over the last 30 years from her work as an historical anthropologist, and which led to her major writing: *The Chalice and the Blade* (1986). Findings from her research on the fundamental values held by cultures over the last 300,000 years raise questions for us concerning our rather simplistic assumptions about change in education.

Eisler sets forth a picture of *Partnership cultures* (actualization power), which are characterized by linking (rather than ranking), cooperation, nurturance, participation, sharing, spirituality, the creative arts, and a balance of male and female roles. *Dominator cultures* (domination power), on the other hand, are characterized by the dominance of one sex over the other (in most countries, this is male dominance over females), institutionalized hierarchy and ranking of one role group over another, in-group versus out-group thinking, acquired wealth and resources along with poverty, and

institutionalized violence. Partnership societies, she reported, thrived for about 250,000 years *before* the dawn of civilization. About 50,000 years ago war strategies evolved across communities to gain more territory as institutions of dominance emerged within societies. In the last four or five thousand years of history there has been an increased use of dominance as a way of life among nations throughout the world.

The very roots of bureaucratic systems are found in the traditions of control, and are likely to remain in place with only slight variation. Failed change efforts tend to reinforce the strength of these ancient values, and the seeming impossibility of managing substantive change. Today's top-down organizational structures that have been honed over the last 100 years have more firm roots in the ancient traditions of dominance than we might have imagined. Eisler projects, however, that international conditions now seem ripe at the end of the 20th century for there to be a reversal of cultural patterns in favor of Partnerships, with Norway and Sweden providing two of the best examples. Many of partnership's central features are on the increase world-wide, even though domination remains the norm almost everywhere.

Consider these **characteristics of dominator cultures**, where domination power guides organizational change (* identified by Eisler):

.*One sex over another	.*Institutionalized hierarchy
.*Ranking	.In-group and out-group thinking
.Acquired wealth and resources	.*Institutionalized violence
.Binary thinking	.Non-permeable organizational boundaries

Within this view, only "some" have the power to direct and effect change efforts, and these efforts commonly are self serving for persons in leadership positions. Growth is controlled within the allowable limits of the traditions that maintain existing power bases; and any movement away from the epicenters of power is not tolerated.

Consider the alternative **features of partnership cultures** where actualization power guides growth and change (* identified by Eisler):

.*Linking	.*Coopearation	.*Nurturance
.*Participation	.*Balance among sex roles	.Sharing
.*Spirituality	.*Creative arts'	.Systemic Thinking
.Permeable organizational boundaries		

What appears to exist within the partnership framework is the advancement of culture for the common good, which is based on values of shared power and meeting the needs of all.

As schools and districts consider moving to Quality work cultures then, there are choices to be made about the intended purpose and outcomes of change efforts. Is the choice to continue the power structures for the haves to dominate the have-nots, or will the power and work be designed to advance the success and satisfaction of all constituents? Is change intended to perpetuate the values of domination and success for a few, or will the actualization of all professionals and students become the guiding value?

These and other questions are central to choice-making, and have their roots in fundamentally opposing philosophical world views. Not every educator wants to develop a partnership culture of access and success for all, and hence, the choices leaders make will determine the products and outcomes of change efforts. Consider the following Quality features within the dominator and partnership work cultures.

Dominator Culture	Partnership Culture
Customer is the self and tradition	Customer is the student, parents, etc.
A mandate to change	Continuous improvement by workers
Emphasis on statistical tools	Emphasis on gathering information
Vision: efficient operations	Vision: student success in life
Punishment of workers	Teaching and learning among workers
Fear in the workplace	Opportunity in the workplace
Improve existing systems	Create more powerful systems
Decisions made by a few	Decisions made by all

As we consider moving schools toward shared decision making models, cooperative learning, integrated curriculum, partnerships with the community and facilitative leadership, we are confronting more than professional ignorance about these matters. The traditions of dominance, which have existed for thousands of years, lie at the very core of our national culture and values, and all of its bureaucratic institutions. Perhaps the up-rising of the religious right in the USA and its current rampage against schools and the innovations many are embracing, is due to the feared threat that cooperation and partnership will extinguish the dominator traditions. Perhaps this is why many educators are thinking more strategically and politically these days, to off-set the negative influences of the dominator stranglehold on progress, and to advance the values of equalization, actualization and development.

If the Partnership models are to emerge in the next century, then many of us might find ourselves engaged in basic survival efforts, which are often political, to protect this very real threat to the Dominator model. The Partnership/Dominator dichotomy will continue to be a challenge for leaders in developing MINDSHIFTS for managing change. The choice of outcomes is determined to a large extent by the leadership assumptions made about domination or partnership values. In the next section a new Education Quality System (EQS) is presented, which can be used to benchmark change from either a dominator or partnership perspective.

3. The Education Quality System: Benchmarks to Guide Change Efforts

The *Education Quality System* has recently been designed, with the help of school district leaders in Florida, to provide a mental model, along with benchmarks, for leading change efforts over time (Snyder, 1994b; Acker-Hocevar, 1994a). A group of Florida

educators met to ask the question: How can we help school leaders to manage the change in their work cultures that will be necessary to implement the new Florida reform package, known as *Blueprint 2000* (Snyder, 1994b)? This group was composed of school and district leaders from around a major urban area, and faculty from USF's College of Education, who spearheaded the project. Eventually, the planning group invited other leaders from school districts, the College, and the business community to help shape a concept that would extend beyond the normal services that any one agency was providing to principals and their staffs. A member of the Florida Education Reform and Accountability Commission was part of the group, and suggested that we begin to think *big* in our preparation of a proposal for the State. Our goal was to assist schools and districts in developing an alternative accountability process to the traditional State auditing practices, one that would build the response capacities of schools over time to improve the success of their students.

The proposal was prepared by the partnership group, and submitted by the university to the Florida Education Reform and Accountability Commission. It called for developing a comprehensive system of diagnostic and development assistance, which would build upon the best available expertise in the region, and also lead to stronger partnerships across institutions to transform schooling work cultures. Approval of the proposal was given, with the understanding that the partnership would employ a Quality System of some sort to govern its work. The Commissioner of Education then sent letters to each superintendent in the west central region of Florida (13). The superintendents were asked to invite two persons who manage school improvement district-wide, to participate in shaping the new Quality assistance system. The university assumed responsibility for working with these leaders to identify or to develop and pilot a new Quality system. The regional training network assumed responsibility for managing the pilot schools in the projects and designing the professional development system of assistance that was to follow.

In a two day retreat with district leaders, Quality literatures were explored, along with the current challenges facing education, the Baldrige Award criteria and Florida's Sterling Award criteria. Rather than adopting an existing Quality system designed for business, the district leaders requested that the university Research Team develop an education-specific Quality system; one that would build upon Quality principles, Systems thinking, and Change, and also address the challenges of education within a changing social and technological era. Various literatures were studied in depth by the research team, and a prototype education Quality system (*EQBS*) was designed with benchmarks to guide change efforts (see Figure 1). After members of the design team reacted to several drafts, a content validation was conducted, using educators from all school district role groups, as well as national Quality, School Reform and Restructuring experts to rate the five parts of the new system (Acker-Hocevar, 1994a). The result of the validation yielded high ratings for all parts of the content, with minor recommendations for modification. The system now is ready to be used with confidence, to benchmark the change process.

The EQBS was designed for professionals in an organization to examine what systems need to be improved to help more students succeed routinely. Quality was viewed as the vehicle for assisting schools to shed bureaucratic features and design new processes of work. The Education Quality Benchmark System is designed around six dimensions of work (See Figure 1). The overarching feature of a Quality organization is the work culture, which provides the context for work. The six Performance Areas describe the system of interdependent work and its effects. Continual Improvement, the thread referred to as the Kaizen Expressway (a term used by the Japanese for 'continuous improvement'), stimulates all Performance Areas through system-wide improvement. The Performance Areas function interdependently to enhance the energy for work, and include: visionary leadership, strategic planning, systems thinking and action, information systems, human resource development, and quality services. The Result Area of Customer Success and Satisfaction provides the focus and rationale for work.

[Insert figure 1 here]

Table 1 below outlines the many dimensions within the Performance and Results areas, which in the aggregate provide the focus for change and development within the organization over time.

Table 1: An Overview of EQBS Performance Outcomes

Performance Area 1: Visionary Leadership

1.1 Vision Building
1.2 Constancy of Purpose
1.3 Support for Change
1.4 Optimization of the System
1.5 Alignment of System with Purpose

Performance Area 2: Strategic Planning

2.1 Strategic Plan Development
2.2 Needs Assessment
2.3 Visionary Planning
2.4 Data Utilization
2.5 Information Access
2.6 Performance Standards
2.7 Resource Alignment
2.8 Resources Sought

Performance Area 3: Systems Thinking and Action

3.1 Alignment of Functions
3.2 Alignment of Services
3.3 Variation Identification
3.4 Knowledge Utilization
3.5 Process Improvement
3.6 Information Search
3.7 Worker Motivation

3.8 Barrier Removal
3.9 Organizational Structures
3.10 Systems Innovation
3.11 Internal Interdependence
3.12 External Interdependence
3.13 Piloting as a Way of Life

Performance Area 4: Information Systems

4.1 Quality Tools
4.2 Assessment Data
4.3 Tools and Technology
4.4 Feedback
4.5 Systems Control
4.6 Systems Control
4.7 Communications Systems

Performance Area 5: Human Resource Development

5.1 Lifelong Learning
5.2 Training Services
5.3 Trainers/Facilitators
5.4 Coaching and Mentoring
5.5 Learning Organization
5.6 Knowledge Development
5.7 Performance Recognition
5.8 Employee Health and Job Satisfaction
5.9 Optimism

Performance Area 6: Quality Services

6.1 Services Meet Needs
6.2 Customer/Supplier Relationships
6.3 Customer Service Measures

Result Area: Customer Success and Satisfaction

1. Trends
2. Responsiveness
3. Commitment

The EQBS system is both a framework for managing change, and a diagnostic tool for aligning the systems of work around the needs of students. Schools can strengthen the direction of change through a diagnostic process. The *Quality Change Process Model* (Figure 2) depicts the four phases of development to a Quality System: 1) bureaucratic, 2) awareness, 3) transition, and 4) transformation. Indicators under each of the Development Phases depict, then, this change process over time as a school moves from a Bureaucratic to a Quality System. Table 2 illustrates major characteristics of work that are found in the four developmental phases.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Table 2: Organizational Development Phases Toward Quality

Phase Elements	Descriptions for Key Elements of the Phases
Bureaucratic Phase:	**Current Way of Doing Business**
Focus:	Institutional policies, programs, and regulations
Beneficiary:	Federal, State and District policy makers
Decision Makers:	Policy makers
Outcomes:	Compliance with policy, program guidelines and regulations
Data:	Gathered to meet policy requirements
Awareness Phase:	**Organization Begins To Unfreeze Work Patterns**
Focus:	Program improvement and professional development
Beneficiary:	Professional educators, programs and services
Decision Makers:	Administrators and School Improvement Team, Task Forces
Outcomes:	To meet school improvement requirements, and to gain more knowledge and skills
Data:	Collected to meet Federal, State, and District requirements
Transition Phase:	**Change Process Under Way**
Focus:	Organizational growth and improvement
Beneficiary:	The organization
Decision Makers:	Administrators, Unit Leaders, Members and Customer Groups
Outcome:	Beginning system interdependence and capacity building for organizational change
Data:	Base line data are used to meet state requirements, and to make decisions and to solve problems
Transformation Phase:	**Organization Begins to Institutionalize New Work Processes and Structures**
Focus:	Continuous systemic improvement and learning
Beneficiary:	The internal/external customers
Decision Makers:	Customers, Suppliers internal and external to the system
Outcomes:	Students ready for the 21st Century of work, family, and community, within a self renewing organization, responsive to changing environmental conditions
Data:	Synthesis of data drives decision making that impacts the results
	Quality Phase: Quality is institutionalized, with ongoing Continual Improvement

The Quality System that is found at the end of the continuum in Figure 2, is fundamentally different from the bureaucratic system in its purpose and delivery of services. Its goal is to identify specific student needs, rather than to fit students into "canned" programs. Given a "responsiveness" orientation, workers are free to

continuously innovate programs and services to enhance client success and satisfaction. Rather than being dependent upon established practice, workers in high performing organizations are encouraged to function independently as professionals, while working interdependently to achieve new purposes. Systems thinking encourages members in the organization to assume new responsibilities for the overall success of services and results. Transforming structures, policies and programs from the control emphasis found in bureaucratic systems to responsive patterns found in Quality Systems, requires attention to development of the work culture over time.

The content of the system has undergone an extensive content validation that was both quantitative and qualitative (Acker-Hocevar, 1994a), and it received high marks from all groups of participants in the validation study. Comments from the various participants concerning their overall reaction to the system were very positive and included remarks such as: *The Quality Performance System appears to be an important breakthrough in the assessment and diagnosis of organizational performance and results areas, which might have applicability to a broad spectrum of organizations, both private and public.* Another participant wrote: *The indicators that are descriptors of the Quality Change Process provide a clear and relevant format for self-assessment. Well-designed.*

The EQBS is now ready for schools to pilot as a diagnostic tool and a benchmark system for guiding change through chaotic environments. The System is designed as a *relative* guide, rather than as a control protocol. A school will probably never reflect all the Quality features listed within the System, but by knowing the preferred general direction for school change, the leader can guide development toward greater responsiveness. Benchmarks here are described as guideposts, rather than as absolutes for compliance audits, as schools shape their work cultures over time to help more students succeed.

4. The Principals' Voice in Managing Quality

Simultaneous with our work on the EQBS, we conducted a case study to examine the change process in the 28 schools. What emerged from an analysis of the data was a story of change toward Quality work cultures. The principals who were selected for the study had previously been trained in the Managing Productive Schools 25 day training program (Snyder, 1988; Snyder, et. al. 1992), and were subsequently taught to be MPS trainers of their peers. Consequently, these principals were highly skilled and knowledgeable in managing change within their own schools.

Surveys for 1,235 teachers, and interviews of 28 principals, followed a qualitative methodology, which included examining the data for themes and patterns, which were then correlated with the literature bases on school change, systems thinking, leadership, restructuring , and quality management. The *School Work Culture Profile* (SWCP) (Snyder, 1988b), a diagnostic instrument, was administered to the entire staff at each school, and provides a quantitative measure on the relative involvement of the staff in

decision making. The instrument has been through rigorous testing over the past eight years to establish reliability (alpha=.97), validity (scale mean= 5.53), as well as the primary factor analytic structure (one factor), and the secondary factor analytic structures (four higher order factors) (Johnson, Snyder, Anderson & Johnson, 1994). The SWCP is based on the *Managing Productive Schools* Training Program (MPS), which is a systems approach to organizational change (Snyder & Anderson, 1986; Snyder, 1988a).

Initial findings from all three data sets in the present study were reported at AERA in 1994 (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar & Wolf). The principal interview data have been examined further and are presented here to illustrate the natural features of change for a partnership and systems perspectives. The EQBS model (figure 1) provide a useful lens for reporting the themes and patterns we found about the characteristics of change in differing school environments.

The transcribed interview data from 28 principals were entered into a computer program called *Ethnograph*, which made the identification of common themes possible within and across the 28 data sets. Patterns that emerged from the data analysis are presented here within the Education Quality System framework. It not only outlines the work dimensions for managing change, but also presents these dimensions as interrelated and interdependent for principals. The nine dimensions of managing change that we found include: visionary leadership, strategic planning, systems thinking, information systems, human resource development, Quality programs and services, continuous improvement, Quality culture, and customer success and satisfaction.

Visionary Leadership

The focus of the principal's vision centers around the attainment of success for all student populations. The clarity of this image seems to drive strategic thinking and planning as principals manage the change process. Almost equally important is the vision for the school's work culture, which is described in multiple ways around the central theme of staff collaboration. A vision of student success has a corollary of staff success in working together toward common ends that influence student success. The mission of the school focuses on preparing students for life success, which is something of a departure from the graduation goals of past schooling decades. There is a sense of urgency in these principals' minds that all populations, especially the at-risk populations, need to be prepared for a changing work world in which to make contributions to the community.

The principal of the middle/high school said it this way: "My vision is to develop a school where kids are successful, where the adults are cooperatively involved and ....want to work with us." An elementary principal reported, "My vision of this school is to help students to become productive citizens in the school. This is the first step in the voyage to becoming productive citizens involved in their community." Another principal shared: "I would like to see children leaving here as confident, self reliant learners where they have the ability to seek and handle information, to solve problems and communicate, and to adapt to the changes that they are going to encounter." The principal of the full service

school, with students from pre-school to adults, said: "My vision has been to make this a 'statue of liberty' school. With the adult population, there are people who are taking big steps towards completing a life long goal of getting a diploma or a GED. There are so many horizons that have not been explored."

All 28 principals seem to be driven by a belief that most students want to, and can, succeed in what is required of them in school, and that by working together the staff functions as a positive force in the lives of students. They see their leadership challenge as one of encouraging teams to invent more powerful programs and services over time, and to sponsor innovation and piloting. Quality is everyone's job, they report consistently, where the focus is on the success of students.

However, not all teachers within a school appear to be ready to participate in collaborative activities, or to make changes in their programs and services. Initially, much energy is devoted to developing the staff's readiness to see the need, while ensuring they have the skills and knowledge for engaging in the continuous improvement of programs and services. One principal shared: "The way we involved the staff in the vision statement was to ask: What do we want children to look like when they leave our schools? We listed ideas, clustered and labeled them and then wrote a brief, concise vision statement." Another principal told us: "My vision is for everybody to function as a leader; and have a focus for growth and be self directed. Everyone is trying new things, they're reading professional literatures, sharing, coaching each other, and facilitating student learning."

Strategic Planning

A vision of student success for all populations belongs not only to the principal in this study, but also to the staff. School improvement goals are established through consensus building every year within structures for total staff involvement and goal setting and planning involves not only teachers but parents, students and community leaders as well.

Action planning directs the work that is implicit in the school improvement goals, as task forces and teams develop blueprints for their work. A wide assortment of both temporary and permanent structures is designed for goal-related activity; and goals tend to become the responsibilities of many task forces and/or teaching teams as the work is divided. Principals report that the simple action planning of the past decade is evolving into more in-depth study groups who explore options before decisions are made. Simple solutions are being replaced more often by comprehensive plans and long lasting change efforts. In addition, teachers receive training in collaborative planning skills, and in facilitating collaborative ventures. As strategic plans become translated into action plans, many innovative structures evolve along the way to link talents with tasks. One elementary principal shared:

> " Before, the comprehensive plan was something I did over the summer after each committee had made recommendations. However, teachers didn't seem to use the plans. When we met in the cafeteria to review the information

> we had gathered on our progress, along with the district and state goals, we decided on some priorities. We then turned all the information into goals for our school and strategies for our work. That year all 110 of the staff prepared the comprehensive plan, a copy of which was given to each team and task force for reference in their planning. Now, the teachers have the big picture and know how it all fits together; they see more of the whole puzzle."

Another principal reports: "We have used school-wide goal setting since I came. The first year we looked at surface things. The second year we dove into integrated units, and this year we are implementing integrated instructional programs. At the end of the year when we were deciding on goals for the next year, the teachers suggested that we refine interdisciplinary instruction strategies. Now, goals drive the work we do."

Systems Thinking and Action

Principals report that unless they have been able to select their own staffs, the obsolete practice and concept of isolation (in self-contained classrooms) in the school is shed only gradually, as teaming requires teacher training, coaching, and taking on new challenges over time. Gone is the discussion or tolerance of people working alone. However, structures that foster articulation across both curriculum and grade levels seem to flourish, while cross-functional teams focus on the integration of curriculum and services to meet student needs.

It is of special interest that multi-aged and nongraded teams were found as pilots, not only in elementary schools, but in every middle and high school in our study. The three secondary principals reported that content driven departments in their high schools are a thing of the past, for teachers are expanding the practice of integrated programs, while pilots are viewed as strategies to test new ideas.

A high school principal shared: "I think an important area of growth is that the leadership team now thinks they have moved beyond the quality and evaluation of the school as an administrative responsibility. This is now a responsibility that is shared by the leadership team and teachers, all looking at student achievement and how to improve it. We have broken a sacred cow by talking about the effects of our collective work." Another principal reports: "The focus needs to be a core set of beliefs and standards that we are working towards. Everything needs to be driven by these. Interdependence breaks down some times, but we keep going and learning from our experiences."

Systems thinking, which refers to the interdependency of programs and functions around common goals, was consistent across schools. For example, "inclusion" programs flourish now as teachers work together to integrate special education students into the regular classroom. Interdisciplinary learning programs focus on a major theme, while integrating separate curriculum areas. Networks and partnerships are thriving in the more high-involvement work cultures to make use of resources and opportunities outside the school. Advisory councils and leadership teams now address challenges that are common

to the school as a whole, and solve problems that effect all units. The traditional boss-principal has been replaced with a leadership team that represents the various work units and community groups, and this team fosters interdependence and innovation among all work groups.

Information Systems

Establishing new information systems represents the greatest area of change for principals. The question, "How are we doing?" seems to prompt a search for new kinds of information. While many schools in the past excelled in gathering information and preparing reports for district and state compliance purposes, they found that the traditional kinds of data are not very useful for improvement purposes. Principals and teachers are now seeking ways to gather new kinds of information that will inform their planning. And so the question looms large: "What kinds of information will help us improve our services?" Parent and community survey data are being used more often now for improvement planning. Analyzing accomplishments, in relation to goals, also points out areas for improvement.

The biggest area of change concerning information systems relates to the use of student performance data. Principals continue to pay attention to attendance patterns, test performance, honor roll, annual comparisons, bus referrals, percentages going to college, and grade distributions. However, new curriculum rubrics and continuous progress programs offer challenging opportunities for gathering more detailed information on student progress, and teachers are learning new skills to analyze such information. Many schools even have "measurement task forces" to explore innovative ways to gather data that are useful in staff decision making. Most principals report they have pilot projects to develop and test the concept of student portfolios. These somewhat fresh approaches to data collection and reporting of student progress raise many critical questions about what is useful and reliable information, and what signifies progress and success. Most principals seem excited about the potential that other forms of information will have for guiding the strategic planning and daily decision making processes.

A high school principal reports: "I just came from a staff meeting where we decided that assessment is the weakest part of every thing we do. Having student outcomes for our school will help us, and so also will the new state competencies for graduation. We have a committee organized now to begin the work of deciding on outcomes for graduation; starting with where we want to end, and then working backwards."

Another high school principal approached the information task differently: " I give team leaders the overall grade distribution of the school; they give the team distribution data to their teachers, as well as individual teacher distributions. The data raise questions for the team leader to use to guide instructional improvement. However, we now think that the whole assessment system has got to change; the organization has to change from

individual and group competition to group and class production of products and services. New kinds of information that will help us respond are still somewhat elusive."

Human Resource Development

It seems significant that during the interviews about assessment and staff development, no principal in any school mentioned teacher evaluation as a function in improving the quality of work. The practice probably still continues, but when principals think about developing their school, they focus more on professional development issues. In fact, many spoke about the development of professionals as their major investment in the future of the school. Professional growth was the chief strategy identified by principals for advancing the school's work culture and its effects upon students. The goal of human resource development for principals today is the empowerment of teams, developing knowledgeable and skillful professionals in groups, who can meet new challenges. Although important, discussion of compliance with regulations seems to be at most a backdrop for development.

One principal reports: "You have to start training people to lead productive groups, to have interaction skills, and to evaluate what they are doing. They need to know how to coach each other, and to receive coaching from team leaders and administrators. I don't think in the beginning I devoted enough time to staff training in the necessary skills. Each year now the teams choose what kinds of professional development they want, and that's what we do. It always relates to goals; you have to teach them about the natural interdependence between goals and staff development."

Professional development systems in these schools are extensive, and include workshops, using teachers as trainers, conferences, seminars, book clubs, visitations, graduate work, networks and partnerships, and leadership development. There is a strong linkage between the school improvement goals and the focus of the staff development programs within a given year, for new knowledge and skills are viewed as enabling strategies. Professional development centers around innovations and pilots of new programs, strategies and structures, as well as the tools for working collaboratively. Training for teams focuses on facilitation in goal setting, planning, action and results, on group problem solving, and on personality inventories that enhance group work. Peer coaching and problem solving provide a natural way of working within teams, as professionals learn with and from each other to advance the school's capacity to enhance student success.

All principals reported they now have recognition programs for teachers, and more often now for teams. When teachers understand the power of recognition they in turn develop programs to salute student achievements, and in time celebrate the contributions of parent volunteers and of community agencies and business. In fact, the negative climate that reportedly existed in some schools has been replaced with the celebration of successes and a collective optimism for the future.

Quality Programs and Services

Most principals reported that teachers no longer use text books as a sole source for information, and neither are the practices of tracking and retention viewed as a workable strategy to enhance student success. Teachers are exploring alternative ways to enhance student success within variable structures. The most prevalent forms of program development are the integrated curriculum within teams, and continuous progress structures. New programs tend to center around real life community challenges, and are guided by rubrics that specify levels of performance for students in many subject areas. Integrated and continuous progress programs stimulate interdependence among students and the curriculum, and because of the ways these two innovations enhance student learning, they soon will become institutionalized. In a sense, principals and their staffs are only beginning to understand the potential of integration and continuous progress for students. Authentic assessment pilots tend to be limited now to reading and writing, with the expectation that the concept will be expanded when there is a greater understanding of how the concepts can be operationalized.

One principal shared: "It took us five years of learning how to work together and to be successful with our initiatives before we were ready to tackle the really tough problems with some student populations in our school. Now we understand how to work through things, to learn together and do what it takes to succeed. When we began to address questions about certain student populations, we naturally explored continuous progress programs and structures. We began with pilots, and today our entire school is built around nongraded learning communities, while the district has developed new continuous progress systems that we are piloting. We all have learned together, and now continuous progress programs are found in most of our elementary schools, with middle and high school systems being developed and piloted."

For instruction, information bases are now guiding decisions more often for student placement, rather than age and grade level. Integrated curriculum pilots are changing the role of teacher from decision maker and controller, to facilitator of student success. Perhaps one of the most striking themes is the changing role of the student in the learning process from individual recipient of information to team-member and producer of products. Forms of cooperative learning, while working toward common goals, are replacing competition and isolation practices among students, and the biggest change of this sort can be seen in high schools. In this study, nongraded structures are replacing tracking patterns at all levels of schooling (K-12), and are having a positive effect on student success patterns. Tutorials that span age levels function to help students at all ages. Technology has begun to cause a revolution in learning, replacing the teacher function of dissemination and drill. This has encouraged new facilitative roles to evolve for the teacher.

Continual Improvement

Principals in this study reported a shift in their thinking about the function of reliable information for making decisions. Most shared that they are beginning to explore the meaning of "data-based decision making". Continuous progress structures require new data systems for improvement, and the teaching team has evolved as the accountable unit for improvement and results. The more that teachers make use of student performance data, the more they are shifting from "improving to meet guidelines", to "improving to help students succeed".

An elementary principal reports: "Managing the quality of work is the hardest part of this job. Last year I asked each team to set goals for student demonstrations by the end of the year. But I'm not satisfied yet; we get data but we're not sure what to do with it. We are looking for alternative forms of assessment for children, and are experimenting with various portfolio formats." Another principal reports: "We're not using report cards at all, and everyone is experimenting with and learning together about portfolios."

Empowerment is an issue as the school's work culture matures, with not all teachers being ready or willing to assume new kinds of responsibility. Principals report that about one third of the teachers from these schools seem pleased about empowerment opportunities, while the other two thirds are still less than enthusiastic. Indeed, these uninvolved teacher populations were a continuing challenge. Interestingly, not many principals perceive that large groups of negative or disinterested teachers exist; the challenge for them is found in the wide range of teacher readiness and willingness to be responsible for improvements.

School improvement goals now focus on pilots for such programs as whole language and reading, continuous progress structures, integrated curriculum, and authentic forms of assessment. Principals spoke about pilots as a strategy to test new ideas, and they seemed less inclined to launch new innovations school wide until their success can be predicted. Piloting with eager teachers seems to work in adapting innovations to local conditions.

The leadership team is viewed by principals as a major force for innovation. In the past leadership teams were more concerned with monitoring compliance patterns. Now they often are the sparks and facilitators for innovation within teaching teams and task forces. The leadership team also seems to be the training ground for new school leaders, as it develops new systems and strategies for school wide enhancement, and for the interdependence of programs and services.

Quality Culture

Principals report a shift over time from a "me" to a "we" culture of work. Parents and community agencies, and businesses, seem more integrated into the school's life and now are partners in the development of youth. A climate of success has replaced the crisis

orientation from past years, as school cultures move from chaos to clarity of focus for invention. The new interdependent work structures have not only stimulated those who were eager to grow, but many of the "old timers" have been revitalized to become a force for change. Working on task forces tends to release talent and energy for more exploration and design work, and this influences the quality of work within teaching teams. A sense of family is evolving in schools, one that focuses on "community", and the big story centers around the extent of parent and community involvement in the daily life of the school. The walls of school isolation are disintegrating and being replaced with open doors to participate in the life of not only the school, but also the community.

One principal shared: "Teachers are telling me that they aren't afraid to try new things; there no longer is fear of reprimand. They are doing an excellent job creating integrated curriculum programs now." Another principal reported: "the most important ability is for a team to evaluate their own work. They need training in how to ask questions and look at their work objectively. Collaboration allows them to have a quality product. Their knowledge base is high because of our continuous staff development. The focus of our work is on student achievement."

Within most of the 28 schools a "learning community" is forming, one that asks new questions and where over time staff confidence is developed to explore, invent and examine new options. And what keeps the change process moving? Principals report a growing sense of moral responsibility among the staff to do whatever it takes to help all students succeed, especially the at-risk populations. This growing focus on student success provides the energy for continuous development. The picture of collaboration exists within teams, to be sure, but it also extends now to other teams and task forces, and to networks and partnerships across institutions.

Customer Success and Satisfaction

What effect is the evolving culture of work having on student populations? Rather than sharing quantitative student performance patterns, principals shared with us stories of new concentrations of adult energy to help more students succeed. Principals also reported noticeable growth patterns among at-risk populations. Also, appreciated is that many parents work as volunteers, serve on councils and task forces, function as mentors and tutors, provide dinners and other special events featuring students, and participate in training sessions with the staff.

Considerable effort has been made by principals to engage local businesses and agencies in the school's challenges, and the list of participating organizations is quite extensive. One principal in a rural setting said: "We've been adopted by the Chamber of Commerce, and many businesses are sponsoring school attendance projects, the ABC program, specific children, clothing drives, and adopting needy families. It's not just money that we get from these sources; we have become a part of the community, and together we have established a way to care about families through the school. The partnerships with our businesses have developed relationships of caring." Schools such as

this one are more integrated with community businesses and agencies now, and gone is the sense of school isolation from the community, or the practice of business only helping the school. Many programs also exist for students to work, for example in nursing homes, and to shadow professionals to learn about career options. New innovative programs enable students to become actively engaged in their communities, while still in school, and to interact with the community in its daily life.

Overall Patterns

We learned from this study that when principals are knowledgeable and skillful in managing change, they are also confident in strategic planning and decision making tasks. Change occurs over time, and is a different phenomenon in each school. Change is not time bound, but rather is determined by the readiness of the faculty to address the challenges they face; and developing the readiness of the staff to address increasingly complex problems over time is the new work of principals. A constant challenge is to think clearly about the integration of functions and services toward common goals as schools function within chaotic environments. This translates as developing an interdependence among school planning, staff development, program development and school assessment systems, and the integration gradually matures over time for these principals. A shared vision of success for all students becomes the umbrella for all development activity.

Principals who understand the change process tend to be successful in engineering school development, and in this case study, MPS training provided a fund of knowledge and skills for their work. A strong vision of success for the school eventually permeates the culture, and drives continuous program and professional development. Collaboration takes many forms as cultures mature, beginning within teams, and moving out to task forces across the school and district, and then to networks and partnerships across different types of institutions. The leadership team is a major source of energy for the school, one that stimulates innovation and nurtures exploration. Perhaps the most striking pattern found in the principals' voice is the strength of the principal's vision of success for all students, and a belief in the capacity of the faculty to respond to complex, difficult and changing conditions. Their belief in the capacity of teachers to be able to respond to the needs of students today tends to provide moral strength for principals to meet the political challenges along the way.

Transforming the work culture of schools from bureaucratic patterns to those that are more responsive to needs requires leaders who understand change within chaotic environments, who welcome the challenge and have a passion for systemic change, and who embrace systems thinking and possess the facilitation skills to engineer school development through the mine fields over time. The voice of successful principals in our study provides hope for breaking the deadlock on traditional dominator work cultures, and for transforming them into vital learning organizations.

Summary: Changing to a Partnership Work Culture

Changing school work cultures is driven by philosophical assumptions and values about people and their roles in society. The Dominator and Partnership Cultural characteristics provide a frame of reference for decision making and for engineering the direction and outcomes of change. To shift to a partnership frame will require extraordinary skill and a fundamental commitment to do "whatever it takes" to move against the prevailing traditions of dominance and "power over."

The new *Education Quality Benchmark System* is a diagnostic tool for school leaders to employ over time with their staff, students and parents in developing increasingly responsive systems of work and service programs to the evolving needs of various client groups. The story from twenty-eight principals illustrates how successful change can be managed so that responsive structures, systems and programs, and continuous invention and improvement evolve to affect the clients being served.

In a post-modern era, the choices each leader makes will effect both the processes of change and their effects. Moving toward Quality cultures requires choices about value issues. The EQBS can become a tool for realizing either more efficient bureaucratic systems or services that are more responsive to the needs of students, their parents and communities. Not one principal's story was like another's, in either the context of the school or in the change strategies that worked for them. The patterns that did emerge from their interviews reinforce the utility of Quality as a mental model for guiding change.

Is change to a Quality way of life possible in schools? Much depends upon the assumptions made by the school leader initially, and the choices made along the way. The future of schooling in the 21st century may well depend on the quality of principals. Their philosophical orientations and value systems will determine to a large extent the kind of outcomes that emerge from change efforts. It's a matter of choice!

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Figure 1:

Education Quality System

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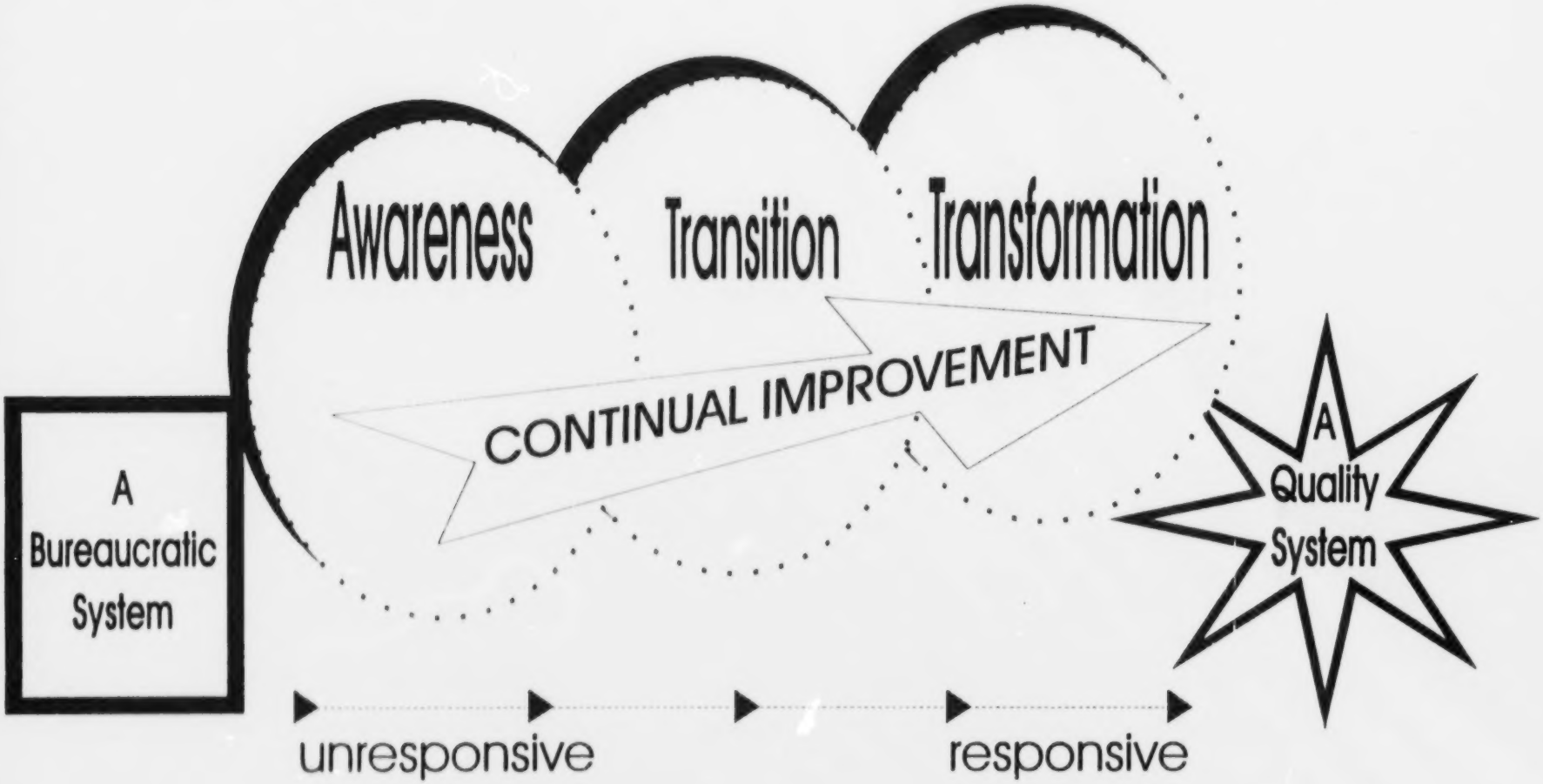
Figure 2: **Quality Change Process Model**

for customer success and satisfaction



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